ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION No. 223

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 23, 2021

Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman NANCY F. MUNOZ
District 21 (Morris, Somerset and Union)
Assemblyman JON M. BRAMNICK
District 21 (Morris, Somerset and Union)
Assemblywoman VALERIE VAINIERI HUTTLE
District 37 (Bergen)

SYNOPSIS

Urges Biden Administration to prioritize funding for Gateway Program.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 3/1/2021)

1	AN ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION urging the Biden Administration to
2	prioritize funding for the Gateway Program.
3	
4	WHEREAS, The Northeast Corridor (NEC) is the most heavily used
5	passenger rail line in the United States; and
6	WHEREAS, More than 2,000 intercity and commuter trains, supporting
7	approximately 800,000 passenger trips, use the corridor to make
8	daily trips across eight states and Washington D.C.; and
9	WHEREAS, The existing North River Tunnels, which carry the NEC
10	under the Hudson River, are over 100 years old, were severely
11	damaged in 2012 by Superstorm Sandy, and are in a serious state of
12	disrepair; and
13	WHEREAS, The Gateway Program (program) was unveiled on
14	February 7, 2011 as a planned phased expansion and renovation of
15	the NEC rail line between Newark, New Jersey and New York City,
16	New York; and
17	WHEREAS, The program would build new rail bridges in the New
18	Jersey Meadowlands, new tunnels under Bergen Hill (Hudson
19	Palisades) and the Hudson River, and finance the construction of a
20	new terminal annex; and
21	WHEREAS, Since the program's inception, costs and funding for the
22	project have caused delays and there has been little movement on
23	the overall program, which, cannot move forward without federal
24	support, due to ownership by the National Railroad Passenger
25	Corporation (Amtrak), federal permitting requirements, and the
26	regional nature of the project; and
27	WHEREAS, Every year the program is delayed, the cost of labor and
28	materials rises; and
29	WHEREAS, If the tunnels continue to deteriorate to the point where
30	they must shut down, the United States economy would suffer a
31	\$16 billion loss over four years, as noted in a February 2019 report
32	by the Regional Plan Association (RPA); and
33	WHEREAS, Additionally, the RPA report noted that a shutdown of the
34	tunnels would cause New Jersey home values to depreciate by \$22
35	billion; and
36	WHEREAS, Finally, if the tunnels were closed, service between New
37	Jersey and New York and between Washington, D.C. and Boston
38	would be halted and the roadways would be gridlocked with
39	thousands of additional motorists; and
40	WHEREAS, Having traveled frequently on the NEC and having once
41	noted that the Hudson tunnels are " the lifeline for the northeast,"
42	President Biden and his administration are called upon to prioritize
43	the funding of this integral program; now, therefore,
44	
45	BE IT RESOLVED by the General Assembly of the State of New
46	Jersey:

1.	This	House	urges	the	Biden	Administration	to	prioritize		
funding for the Gateway Program.										

2. Copies of this resolution, as filed with the Secretary of State, shall be transmitted by the Clerk of the General Assembly to the President of the United States, the Majority and Minority Leaders of the United State Senate, the Speaker and Minority Leader of the United States House of Representatives, and every member of Congress from this State.

STATEMENT

This resolution urges the Biden Administration to prioritize funding for the Gateway Program.

The Northeast Corridor (NEC) is the most heavily used passenger rail line in the United States, with more than 2,000 intercity and commuter trains, making approximately 800,000 passenger daily trips across eight states and Washington D.C. The existing North River Tunnels, which carry the NEC under the Hudson River, are over 100 years old, were severely damaged in 2012 by Superstorm Sandy, and are in a serious state of disrepair.

The Gateway Program (program) was unveiled on February 7, 2011 as a planned phased expansion and renovation of the NEC rail line between Newark, New Jersey and New York City, New York. The program would build new rail bridges in the New Jersey Meadowlands, new tunnels under Bergen Hill (Hudson Palisades) and the Hudson River, and finance the construction of a new terminal annex.

However, since the program's inception, costs and funding for the project have caused delays and there has been little movement on the overall program, which, cannot move forward without federal support, due to Amtrak ownership, federal permitting requirements, and the regional nature of the project. Every year the program is delayed, the cost of labor and materials rises. If the tunnels continue to deteriorate to the point where they must shut down, the United States economy would suffer a \$16 billion loss over four years, as noted in a February 2019 report by the Regio nal Plan Association (RPA). Additionally, the RPA report noted that a shutdown of the tunnels would cause New Jersey home values to depreciate by \$22 billion. Finally, if the tunnels were closed, service between New Jersey and New York and between Washington, D.C. and Boston would be halted and the roadways would be gridlocked with thousands of additional motorists.

Having traveled frequently on the NEC and having once noted that the Hudson tunnels are "... the lifeline for the northeast," President Biden and his administration are called upon to prioritize the funding of this integral program.